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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
February 16, 1957

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NEA - Mr. Oulashin

Mr. Macomber has indicated that the attached memorandum of conversation should be approved for distribution by Fraser Wilkins. He requested that prior to approval the sentence beginning at the bottom of page 6 and continuing to the top of page 7 should be revised to reflect that the Secretary was thinking in terms of estimates received from local military personnel not having possession of full information on budget matters or the impact on the budget of their own recommendations.

All copies of the memorandum of conversation are attached and should be returned to me after having been approved.

RS

R. G. Sturgill
Duty Officer

Att.: S/S #1043 - Memo of conv. betw
S and Shaikh Yusuf Yasin 2/7.
(all copies).

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REVIEWED BY J. B. ... DATE 1/15/57

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: February 10, 1957

SUBJECT: Further U.S.-Saudi Arabian Talks

PARTICIPANTS: U.S. Officials
The Secretary
G - Mr. Murphy
NEA - Mr. Rountree
Ambassador Richards
Ambassador Wadsworth
NE - Mr. Wilkins
Mr. Newsom
Mr. Stoltzfus, Recorder
Mr. Nowfel, Interpreter

COPIES TO: S/S, G, NEA (2), NE

Representing Saudi Arabia
Shaikh Yusuf Yasin
Shaikh Mohammad Surur
Ambassador Al-Khayyal
Mamdouh Adib, Recorder
Abdul Aziz Majid, Interpreter

Approved for
distribution by NE-
Mr. Wilkins per
S-Mr. Macomber.
RS
S/S-RO
Dist. made in 9/5

Meeting between the Secretary of State and Shaikh Yusuf Yasin at the Department of State on February 7, 1957, 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The Secretary began the meeting by saying that he had before him a memorandum that the United States had prepared in response to the Arab four-power memorandum His Majesty had brought with him from Cairo. The Secretary said he understood that the four-power memorandum expressed the views of King Hussain, President Nasser, the Prime Minister of Syria, and His Majesty. The Secretary gave a copy of the U.S. memorandum to Shaikh Yusuf.

Shaikh Yusuf thanked the Secretary and commented that the U.S. memorandum would be the subject of review and later comment by His Majesty. The Secretary said that he had not expected to discuss the U.S. memorandum at this meeting but he suggested that it be considered in substance as the U.S. point of view. He said the Saudis would find that the memorandum expressed the same views that he and his associates had explained orally in other discussions during the past week. Shaikh Yusuf replied that perhaps there would be time to transmit the Saudi comments on this memorandum by the next morning. He had, however, been instructed by His Majesty to raise certain other subjects with the Secretary at this meeting. Some of these subjects might include points in the U.S. memorandum.

Yusuf
Shaikh went on to say that His Majesty had been pleased with President Eisenhower's statement that sanctions against Israel might be considered if Israeli forces were not immediately withdrawn from Egypt. Shaikh Yusuf said that in any event he believed the President and Secretary were well aware of

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NEA: WA Stoltzfus

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The Secretary replied that he would like to make one or two comments. As the President had said last Tuesday, the U.S. was strongly hopeful that Israel would comply with the latest UN resolution calling for the withdrawal of Israel behind the armistice lines. The U.S. also hoped there would be such an interposition of UN emergency forces in Gaza and the Straits of Tiran that the likelihood of a further outbreak of hostilities in the area could be excluded.

The Secretary said he knew that the possibility of imposing sanctions against Israel was being discussed by the Arab group in the UN but he had seen no text of the resolution. He said he assumed that the United States would be consulted in connection with any such resolution because its efficacy would depend to some extent upon the United States. The Secretary said that, in the U.S. view, sanctions against Israel should be resorted to only as a last resort and not until other efforts had been exhausted. The Secretary added that His Excellency Shaikh Yusuf had no doubt observed from the U.S. press that there were those who were suggesting that sanctions should not be taken against Israel for its violation unless sanctions were also imposed on Russia for its disregard of the UN resolutions on Hungary. It was also suggested by some that Egypt, too, had violated UN resolutions by acts of belligerency, particularly through the acts of the Fedayeen. The Secretary said that he mentioned these points not with the object of retreating from the statements the President and he had made on the subject but rather in order that his friends might realize that the imposition of sanctions would open up a road that might not later be easy to follow.

Shaikh Yusuf

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The Secretary said that the matter of the Straits of Tiran was related to the whole question of Aqaba as an international waterway and that it might some day be necessary to submit the case to the Court of International Justice. He said that the United States was not prepared to disregard international law but as yet it did not know what the law was on this point.

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that is, that Israel was not entitled to attach conditions to its compliance with the UN resolution. Once the Israeli withdrawal had been assured there would remain the further question of ascertaining the legitimate rights of the interested parties in what was an international waterway. These rights would have to be resolved, and it was to be hoped that this could be done without the recurrence of hostilities.

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The Secretary said that he had raised the legal matter only in order not to conceal the fact that there had been some discussion in the UN with Egypt as to the possibility of resorting to the International Court for decisions on the status of some of these waterways.

Shaikh Yusuf thanked the Secretary for his explanation and said that his main contention was that the U.S. should be on the Saudi Arabian side on this question.

Ambassador Al-Kyayyal said he wished to know whether, after Israel's withdrawal from Sharm al Shaikh, the UN emergency forces would proceed to that point or would advance to the armistice line. Shaikh Yusuf said it was his understanding that the movements of the UN forces would be phased according to a pattern already established in the UN resolution on Israeli withdrawal. The UN resolution, according to Shaikh Yusuf, stipulated that the UN forces would proceed eventually to the armistice line. The Secretary said he knew that talks were in progress between Secretary General Hammarskjold and Egyptian and Israeli officials but that he did not know what their present views were. The Secretary agreed with Shaikh Yusuf that the position of all countries should be to support the UN resolution.

Shaikh Yusuf said he now wished to raise certain subjects of primary concern to the U.S. and Saudi Arabia only. With regard to the exchange of the drafts of notes between them, he said that he wished to know (1) what had been prepared by the United States concerning the subjects that had been discussed during the past week; (2) whether it would be possible to prepare a summary of these talks; and (3) what would be published on these talks.

The Secretary said that he had before him a draft note summarizing the results of Mr. Murphy's talks with His Majesty's Counselors. He

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suggested

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suggested it might be helpful if the interpreter were to read this note to Shaikh Yusuf in Arabic. (For the text of the note, see Tab A.) Mr. Murphy said that it had been the Secretary's suggestion that this note and the Saudi answer be supplemented by detailed memoranda covering the military and economic talks that had been held between the two sides. Mr. Murphy suggested that these supplementary memoranda could be included as annexes to the notes exchanged between the two parties since they explained in greater detail the items discussed in his talks on February 6 with Shaikh Yusuf and Shaikh Mohammad Surur.

Shaikh Yusuf thanked the Secretary and Mr. Murphy for these summaries of the talks of the past week. He said that if he had any complaint to make it was only against the shortness of the time available. He said that it might be difficult for the Saudi side to give a prompt answer to the note and memoranda since they would require translation into Arabic before they were shown to His Majesty. He asked whether it would be possible to have copies of them the same evening so that they could be taken up with His Majesty the next day. The Secretary and Mr. Murphy agreed to have them ready before the close of the meeting.

Shaikh Yusuf thanked the Secretary and Mr. Murphy and said that, though this was hard work, it was in the mutual interest of both parties to finish the job promptly. Shaikh Yusuf added that His Majesty could at least give his general reaction to the note before his departure. In any case, he said, the final agreement would not be a secret one and therefore the notes should be studied with a view to guarding the common interest and making certain that parts which might possibly create adverse propaganda against the two countries were eliminated. In any event he wished to have time perhaps that evening or the next day to study the notes and submit his comments.

The Secretary said he was equally anxious not to include anything in the notes which would prove embarrassing to Saudi Arabia or be incompatible with its complete sovereignty. Shaikh Yusuf said he appreciated this and believed that both sides should discuss the matter, not as two competing teams but as one team working together for the good of all.

Shaikh Yusuf said that he wished to emphasize once again to the Secretary His Majesty's point of view that Saudi Arabia's attempt to acquire adequate arms and equipment within a space of two years would impose heavy burdens on the country's economy. If the army, navy, and air programs were all to be carried out at the same time, it might well increase Saudi Arabia's total military expenditures by \$100 million a year. Unfortunately however, Shaikh Yusuf said, Saudi Arabia was behind in its military defenses and had to make up for lost time. Saudi Arabia did not wish to press its needs on the United States, but it believed the United States should be aware of the facts. Just as Saudi Arabia would be forced to pay an additional \$100 million for training and equipping its army, navy and air force, so it would also have

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to pay

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to pay proportionately for salaries, installations and many other obligations within the country. These facts, Shaikh Yusuf said, had recently been explained in full to Ambassador Wadsworth in Riyadh by the Minister of Finance. Saudi Arabia had committed itself to carry out the full defense program suggested by the United States, but His Majesty wished his friends to realize that this program would entail heavy economic burdens on the country and he had asked whether the United States could assist Saudi Arabia in this regard either now or in the future.

The Secretary said that he understood that most of the financing would be on credit. Mr. Murphy added that Shaikh Yusuf had explained Saudi Arabia's financial problems in previous talks and that he had expressed to Shaikh Yusuf the interest, sympathy, and appreciation of the United States for these problems.

The Secretary said he would like to take this occasion to observe that, in the judgment of the President, himself, and the Secretary of the Treasury, most of the countries of the area were engaged in excessive military programs. These military establishments were very expensive to maintain. The United States was devoting to its military establishment and to those of its allies amounts which many of the ablest economists in the United States felt were excessive. The Secretary said he noted that the Soviet Union had announced substantial reductions in its expenditures on its military forces. Of course, Russia pretended that its reason was that it wished to reduce its armaments, but the actual reason was economic. The United Kingdom was also reducing its military commitments out of financial necessity. The Secretary said he believed that in general the military establishments in most countries were too big. He said he hoped very much that Saudi Arabia would not object to his friendly and well-intentioned advice not to embark on such a large military program that it would strain the economy of the country and force it to depend on an outside power which might prove unreliable and dangerous to Saudi Arabian independence. The Secretary said that the initial financial outlay for arms and military equipment was the lowest. It was the tremendous cost of maintenance, training, and spare parts that eventually ate into the economic vitals of a country. The Secretary said he wished to assure His Excellency, however, that the United States recognized the need of Saudi Arabia for some additional military equipment in order to be better able to defend the Dhahran Airfield, and maintain internal order. He said that he sincerely hoped that Saudi Arabia would not seek so large a military establishment that it could no longer maintain a sound economy or that would be in excess of its economic resources.

Shaikh Yusuf said he was grateful for the Secretary's advice. He said that Saudi Arabia had not been able to get arms previously and thus had to make up for lost time. Saudi Arabia was now trying to get arms only in sufficient quantities to satisfy its needs, and he certainly did not feel that its requests had been excessive. The amounts that had been discussed and agreed upon were Saudi Arabia's minimum needs, which even U.S. experts agreed were essential for internal security. Even this small amount, Shaikh Yusuf said, constituted a heavy burden on the country.

The Secretary said he wondered which military experts Shaikh Yusuf referred to. His thought was that the local military experts, in making their estimates of requirements, were not always in possession of full information on budget matters or the impact on the budget of their own recommendations.

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The Secretary then handed to Shaikh Yusuf a detailed memorandum of the military talks of the past week. He suggested to Shaikh Yusuf that this memorandum be kept permanently secret and that the draft note be kept secret until final agreement had been obtained on its terms and arrangements made for its publication. Shaikh Yusuf expressed his agreement.

The Secretary said he had a few matters to raise with Shaikh Yusuf at this time. Referring to the islands of Farsi and Arabi, the Secretary said that the Saudi memorandum on the subject had only been received on the sixth of February, and the Department's study of it had not yet been completed. The Secretary said that he would communicate the views of the U.S. on the subject, when its study had been completed, to the Saudi Ambassador in Washington. In any event, the Secretary said, Shaikh Yusuf could be confident that if the U.S. could be useful in solving a problem between two of its friends, Saudi Arabia and Iran, it would be very happy to do so.

With respect to the Yemen, the Secretary said he wished to express the concern of the United States Government over reports that considerable quantities of Soviet bloc equipment were entering that country. The Secretary said there were also reports from Amman suggesting that Russian or Czech weapons and equipment were being delivered from Syria to Saudi Arabia.

Shaikh Yusuf said that he could guarantee absolutely that this information was not true. The true story, Shaikh Yusuf said, was as follows: During the recent crisis His Majesty had asked Syria and Egypt for some anti-aircraft guns, provided they were not of Russian manufacture. This had been done

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because at that time Israeli aircraft were making daily sorties over Saudi Arabian territory, particularly in the Tebuk area. The guns that His Majesty received were, he believed, of Swiss manufacture. Shaikh Yusuf said he wished to emphasize, however, that in the past the Russians had frequently offered arms to Saudi Arabia and were in fact continuing to do so. Russian agents in Pakistan, Indonesia, and many other countries were continually pressing Saudi Embassies to report Russia's offers of arms and equipment to His Majesty. Shaikh Yusuf said he would therefore like to caution the U.S. about reports it received concerning Russian arms for Saudi Arabia. His Majesty had given his word that he would take no Soviet arms and he would do nothing behind the back of the U.S. With regard to the Yemen, Shaikh Yusuf said that he wanted to know whether these Russian arms had supposedly been delivered before or after the closing of the Suez Canal. How, he asked, would they have gotten through to the Yemen with the canal closed and Israel controlling the Sinai and Aqaba. Mr. Rountree said that the reports suggested that the Soviet arms for Yemen were being flown from Egypt.

The Secretary said that in any event he wished to state that the U.S. Government understood and appreciated the position of His Majesty and Saudi Arabia on Soviet arms. He had mentioned this subject because he had wished to get the information necessary to help dissipate what he himself had felt were false rumors. Shaikh Yusuf thanked the Secretary and said he would be gratified if he were informed of any adverse reports of this nature about Saudi Arabia; and he offered, in turn, to inform the United States if Saudi Arabia were to receive adverse reports concerning U.S. activities as well. This exchange of information, he thought, would be very useful to both countries. The Secretary concurred and said that was the way for friends to act. It would be unfortunate, he said, to allow the relations of the two countries to become estranged by what could well turn out to be false reports. Shaikh Yusuf added that both sides needed to be very careful and watchful, because their enemies were many and capable.

The Secretary said he wished to mention to Shaikh Yusuf the difficulties that were apparently being met by U.S. official personnel regarding the shipment of their personal effects to and from Saudi Arabia. Ambassador Wadsworth added that this was a matter of long-standing and involved the general principle of the treatment in Saudi Arabia of U.S. clerical staff and Consular employees who were not bearers of diplomatic passports.

Shaikh Yusuf said he did not have any information at hand on the matter and could therefore not give a categorical answer. However, he could assure the United States that American official personnel would be treated exactly as Saudi official personnel were treated in the United States. The only exception he could think of was in regard to religious matters. He said that what he had in mind were certain established religious customs that could not be changed, as for example, the fact that only Moslems could visit the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

25. The Secretary said he would like to call Shaikh Yusuf's attention to the fact that efforts to establish closer relations with Saudi Arabia were complicated by religious factors in this country as well. The Secretary said he hoped, however, that Saudi Arabia could give consideration to the possibility

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possibility of allowing U.S. citizens regardless of their religious faith to at least transit Saudi Arabian territory.

Shaikh Yusuf inquired whether the Secretary was not afraid that some of them might constitute a danger to the Dhahran Airfield. The Secretary replied that he did not think that any American citizen carrying a United States passport would constitute any such danger.

Shaikh Yusuf said that His Majesty had been frank during his appearance on television the day before. During his interview, His Majesty had said that there was no enmity between Saudi Arabia and the Jews as such. The Moslems respected Jews as "people of the Book," but Saudi Arabia did consider all Zionists their enemies. Thus, any Jew who could prove that he had no dealings with the Zionists would not be barred from Saudi Arabia. Shaikh Yusuf noted that in fact one Jew had had dinner with His Majesty recently in Riyadh. The Secretary said that he was glad to have that statement from Shaikh Yusuf.

The Secretary said he also wished to mention that the U.S. hoped a better relationship could be developed between Saudi Arabia on one hand and the United Kingdom and France on the other. The United States believed that although these countries had perhaps made some mistakes they were basically good countries.

Shaikh Yusuf said that he would convey this point to His Majesty. The reasons why Saudi Arabia cut off its relations with these countries, he said, were well known. If the aggression against Egypt and its aftermath could be resolved and a constructive settlement reached, nothing would be more desirable, from the Saudi Arabian point of view, than for its relations to be re-established with the United Kingdom and France. Shaikh Yusuf said that he felt the Secretary could use his good influence to help settle the outstanding difficulties, and that his influence would go a long way towards improving the whole situation. Shaikh Yusuf remarked that, unfortunately, the position with Britain was worse now than it had been when the Secretary visited Riyadh four years ago.

The Secretary said that, as a final point, he thought it would be useful to have the two sides get together immediately to work out a final draft of the joint communique, so that it would be ready for issuance the next day. The Secretary selected Mr. Newsom to work with a member of the Saudi party on this project. Shaikh Yusuf agreed to this procedure, and indicated that he wished to work on it himself for the Saudi side. He said that the results of the economic talks had been intentionally omitted from the Saudi preliminary draft pending final agreement on the subject between the two sides.

Referring to Buraimi, Shaikh Yusuf said that His Majesty had been thankful and appreciative of the Secretary's explanation of United States interest

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in Saudi Arabia's problems with respect to the disputed areas. Shaikh Yusuf added that, because of the current state of Saudi Arabia's relations with the United Kingdom, however, it would not be possible to allow the situation to remain indefinitely as it was. Shaikh Yusuf said that a long time ago King Abdul Aziz (ibn Saud) had asked the United States to arbitrate the question of Buraimi but the United States had declined to accept. Saudi Arabia was now again prepared to offer its support to the United States Government if it would act as mediator in this matter, and it had no objection if the United States wished to offer to both parties its views on a solution to the dispute.

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Shaikh Yusuf said that another point he had in mind to discuss was the subject of Egypt's frozen assets in this country. His Majesty had proposed the freeing of these assets as a way to improve U.S.-Egyptian relations.

The Secretary said that he had given serious thought to His Majesty's suggestion but he felt that the U.S. would not find possible to go beyond some of the measures that it had already taken. The United States Government and its nationals had certain positive financial claims against Egypt and wished to maintain the security of these claims. The United States had not blocked any private Egyptian funds nor had it interfered with any Egyptian Government financial transactions since July. The Secretary said that in fact the United States had advanced \$5 million to help in the clearance of the Canal and had also approved the sending of ten thousand CARE packages to refugees in Egypt. In addition, on February 4, the U.S. had supported an Egyptian request to withdraw \$15 million in loans from the International Bank. The Secretary said he believed all this indicated that the U.S. did not desire to wage an economic war on Egypt. If the question of tolls and the claims of the old Suez Canal Company could be promptly settled, then the way would be open to release the frozen funds, because the reasons for holding these funds would thus be disposed of. The Secretary said he hoped that within the next few days arrangements would be worked out on some of these matters as a result of the current conversations between the Secretary General of the UN and Egyptian representatives. If the present controversy over financial matters concerning Egypt could be settled, this would open the way for a further relaxation of all the financial measures that had been taken against Egypt.

Shaikh Yusuf inquired whether a differentiation could not be made between the assets pertaining to the Egyptian Government and the assets pertaining exclusively to the Suez Canal Company.

The Secretary said that this would not be entirely easy because the Canal Company claimed not only its assets in this country, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere but also considerable additional amounts in tolls that it had not been able to collect after the seizure of the canal by Egypt. As Shaikh Yusuf probably knew, the Secretary said, there had been some discussion about taking a percentage out of future tolls to provide capital for the Universal Canal Company. If this could be agreed upon, it would also help to solve some of the problems.

Shaikh Yusuf said he was sorry to take so much time on this point but His Majesty attached a great deal of importance to the question of bringing Egypt and the United States nearer together.

The Secretary said that, as he had pointed out, the dispute was not so much a political matter as a legal and technical question of the status of the Suez Canal Company and of the tolls.

Shaikh Yusuf said that he knew that the amount of Egypt assets that had be frozen was large. If the assets frozen in this country could be added

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to those of the United Kingdom, the total might more than satisfy the whole claim of the Suez Canal Company. Thus, if the U.S. and Britain put aside the canal company claims and released the rest, it might help to solve Egypt's pressing financial problems. He said that His Majesty hoped that the U.S. would attach the greater importance to the over-all solution of the problem and not lay too much stress on the legal complications.

The Secretary said that His Majesty's concern would be taken into account by the U.S. and, when the situation improved, he hoped His Majesty would get some credit for it from the Government of Egypt, because in fact His Majesty's attitude would have influenced the United States' course of action.

Shaikh Yusuf then took up the question of Algeria and said that Saudi Arabia had been much reassured because the U.S. had proved it was the champion of freedom for all peoples. Shaikh Yusuf said he wondered what the Secretary could now suggest that would help the Arabs through the UN to discredit the idea that Algerian question was purely a French internal matter.

The Secretary said that the U.S. position in the UN was dictated partly by the legal question of whether Algeria was an internal or external problem, and partly by its consideration as to how best to obtain the desired result of peace and increased self-government for the people of Algeria. The U.S. believed that it was highly desirable that there be this debate in the UN and it doubted the usefulness of trying to conclude that debate with a resolution that would deal directly with the substance of the matter. In the United States view a UN resolution directed against France would only harden its attitude and prevent it from taking a moderate position. The Secretary said he believed that considerable progress had been made in Tunis and Morocco without an effort on the part of anyone to impose a certain type of behavior on France.

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Shaikh Yusuf said they were agreed on one point, which was that Algeria was a nation entitled to its own freedom. He said that the Secretary knew ways and means to achieve his goals and he hoped that Mr. Dulles would instruct the U.S. delegation in the UN to work for the ultimate aim of Algerian freedom and independence.

The Secretary said that the U.S. believed that any people who wanted to be free and able to carry out the responsibilities involved were entitled

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to independence. It should be realized, however, that in a situation such as existed in Algeria, all problems could not be solved at once, partly because its population was diverse and the people were divided among themselves. There were, he believed, about 1,200,000 Frenchmen in Algeria today.

Shaikh Yusuf asked how many Algerian Arabs there were in the country.

The Secretary replied that there were perhaps 8,000,000, and he supposed that, if the native Algerians wished to be independent and were prepared to give fair treatment to the minority groups, their views in the long run would prevail. The Secretary said that the first step might have to be self-government, with self-determination as the second step. There was not at present an organized government of Algeria to express authentically the views of all the people. He said that he nevertheless did not think that there was any sharp difference between the Saudi Arabian Government and the U.S. Government in their respective approaches to the subject. It was more a question, the Secretary said, of the best procedure to obtain the desired results.

Shaikh Yusuf said that his final question was one that everyone in the Arab Middle East was asking that that was: what did the U.S. specifically want from the Arabs.

The Secretary replied that he could answer that very easily. The United States wanted nothing from the Arabs except that they be truly independent and enjoy economic stability and prosperity. The United States desired no political engagements of any kind and looked only for an expression of the sincere desire of every Arab state to maintain its own independence.

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If other countries acted more like Saudi Arabia, the Secretary said, their relations with the United States would be good. The Secretary added that, when asked by officials of other Arab states what they should do to improve their relations with the United States, Shaikh Yusuf might simply tell them to behave as Saudi Arabia did.

Shaikh Yusuf said that he would try to make them do so.

Attachment:

Tab A - Draft note summarizing results of Mr. Murphy's talks with His Majesty's Counselors, February 7, 1957.

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